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FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS STAFF

PROGRAM The Daily Drum

STATION WHUR Radio

DATE June 24, 1982

6:00 PM

CITY Washington, DC

SUBJECT The Spy Bill

GLORIA MINOT: Yesterday President Reagan signed into law a bill forbidding the disclosure of government agents' identities, making it a criminal offense to do so. The measure has been opposed by a number of public interest groups, civil liberties organizations and journalists, among them Bill Schaap, co-editor of the Covert Action Information Bulletin which used to publish a Name in Names column in the magazine. Schaap elaborates on his objections to the measure.

BILL SHAAP: The major problem is that the bill has virtually nothing to do with what its sponsors say it does, and that is that we are not keeping the identities of these people secret from anybody. Even the CIA has testified before Congress that the KGB, the British intelligence, all the other intelligence services know far better than we at Covert Action magazine do, who these people are. It's not a question of keeping their identities secret, even though that's the myth which they perpetrated.

MINOT: Schaap also discredits the stated intent of the bill to protect the lives of CIA agents and their families from attempted assassinations, especially those agents operating abroad.

SCHAAP: Any organization that wants to kill these people can do so. The fact that it happens very rarely is, I suppose, testament to the fact that that, in fact, assassination is not a very viable political means. Certainly, you don't stop what you may view as the abuses of American society or the abuses of the CIA by assassinating one particular individual. I mean, that has never worked. Most political groups, I think, understand that.

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MINOT: The measure provides for up to ten years in prison for disclosing -- disclosing federal agents' identities, and fifty thousand dollars in fines.